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New York

President:	Mr. Polyanskiy	(Russian Federation)
Members:	Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	Mr. Inchauste Jordán
	China	Mr. Yao Shaojun
	Côte d'Ivoire	Mr. Djédjé
	Equatorial Guinea	Mr. Ndong Mba
	Ethiopia	Mr. Alemu
	France	Mr. Delattre
	Kazakhstan	Mr. Tumysh
	Kuwait	Mr. Almunayekh
	Netherlands	Mrs. Gregoire Van Haaren
	Peru	Mr. Tenya
	Poland	Mr. Lewicki
	Sweden	Ms. Schoulgin Nyoni
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Allen
	United States of America	Mr. Cohen

Agenda

The situation in the Central African Republic

Report of the Secretary-General on the Central African Republic (S/2018/611)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in the Central African Republic

Report of the Secretary-General on the Central African Republic (S/2018/611)

The President (*spoke in Russian*): In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of the Central African Republic to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the following briefers to participate in this meeting: Mr. Parfait Onanga-Anyanga, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Central African Republic and Head of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic; Mr. Bédializou Moussa Nébié, Special Representative of the African Union to the Central African Republic; and Brigadier General Hermínio Teodoro Maio, Force Commander of the European Union Military Training Mission in the Central African Republic.

Mr. Nébié and Brigadier General Maio are joining this meeting via video tele-conference from Bangui.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2018/611, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on the situation in the Central African Republic.

I now give the floor to Mr. Onanga-Anyanga.

Mr. Onanga-Anyanga (*spoke in French*): Allow me first and foremost to congratulate you, Sir, on your accession to the presidency of the Security Council for this month and for the excellent way in which Russia has organized the FIFA World Cup. This being the era of the selfie, I should have liked to take one with you behind the ball at your desk.

I welcome the Security Council's unity with respect to the prevailing situation in the Central African Republic and the importance that the international community continues to attach to that country, its Government and its people. The participation in this briefing of my sister, the Permanent Representative of the Central African Republic; the Special Representative of the African Union to the Central African Republic, my brother Moussa Nébié; and of my friend Brigadier General Hermínio Teodoro Maio, Force Commander of the European Union Military Training Mission in the Central African Republic, sends a strong message of the international community's commitment to supporting the Central African Republic. It is indeed essential that, in addition to the voices of the Central African authorities themselves, the Council hear those of all who are working together for the restoration of lasting peace in the Central African Republic.

The most recent developments in the Central African Republic since I last addressed the Security Council in February this year (see S/PV.8187) and again on 23 May, during a meeting on various items, demonstrate the extent to which the Central African Republic still needs the full commitment of the Security Council. Since late February, the Central African Republic has faced several outbreaks of violence, both in Bangui and in the interior. However, while the capital was the scene of violent clashes in April and early May, there have recently been encouraging signs of calm.

The threat of attacks on Bangui by some radical elements of the Front populaire pour la renaissance de la Centrafrique (FPRC) have rekindled fears among the population of the capital. Although the robust stance of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) has prevented such threats from materializing, this disturbing rhetoric has unfortunately been exploited by shady political actors who have sought to exploit instability and to fuel ethnic and religious tensions.

Armed groups and factions continue to exert a negative influence on large parts of the country, particularly in the east, centre and north-west of the country. Violent clashes among armed groups, such as those that regrettably took place between the FPRC and the Mouvement patriotique pour la Centrafrique yesterday in Ndélé, also continue to endanger the lives of civilians.

In that highly volatile context, MINUSCA continues to implement its mandate to protect civilians. In fact, our daily work literally consists, in the words of Dag Hammarskjöld, in building bridges against the breaking waves of violence and disintegration. This is

obviously no easy task. The Mission is overwhelmed and its military, police and civilian personnel are the targets of armed groups and criminal gangs, both in the capital and in the countryside. The threats against peacekeeping personnel continue to grow, as Council members have read in the report before them today (S/2018/611).

I therefore appeal for the Council's ongoing support to ensure that MINUSCA has the capacity to respond to the considerable challenges it faces daily. The quality of its investment will be the best guarantee for strengthening constitutional legitimacy and the performance of MINUSCA in the effort to restore the authority of the State. It will also be the best way to prevent future disasters. To that end, every effort has been made to reach the maximum level of force authorized by the Council in resolution 2387 (2017). These additional troops will strengthen our capacity to protect civilians, in the spirit of the recommendations of the report of the independent investigation by Brigadier General (retired) Fernand Marcel Amoussou. Their performance and good behaviour will remain paramount for the Mission.

The current volatile security situation and recurrent clashes among armed groups continue to negatively affect the political process. Nevertheless, the international partners remain committed to stabilizing the country, particularly through the efforts of the African Initiative for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic. My brother and friend, Special Representative Moussa Nébié, will provide comprehensive insights on that issue shortly. I, for one, wish to reaffirm the full support of the United Nations and MINUSCA for that vital initiative for the return of peace and reconciliation in the Central African Republic

I would like to commend the strategic role of the Peacebuilding Fund in supporting the implementation of the National Recovery and Peacebuilding Plan and the African Initiative. In addition, the first meeting of the International Support Group on the Central African Republic was held in Bangui on 11 April. The meeting sent a strong signal to the people of the Central African Republic by demonstrating that the international community has not forgotten their fate and remains committed to supporting the country's stabilization and development efforts. The meeting of 11 April also highlighted the importance of increased cooperation among the countries of the subregion to ensure the long-term stability of the Central African Republic.

I am also encouraged by the support of President Touadera and of the authorities on the panel of facilitators, including in meetings with armed groups, and by the increased national ownership of the process. If it is to be successful, the process must be inclusive and in keeping with the spirit of the Constitution. It is therefore crucial that other segments of the Central African society be involved in the peace process and participate fully in the ongoing stabilization efforts. What is at stake is the search for the necessary consensus around the social contract between the sons and daughters of the Central African Republic so that the co-existence to which they are deeply attached can become a reality in a plural, united and reconciled nation. It will be equally important to support the commitment of the African Initiative panel to neighbouring countries to promote coherent and sustainable subregional and regional commitment to the stabilization and development of the Central African Republic.

In that context, MINUSCA continues to work closely working with the Government to launch local peace and reconciliation initiatives in many prefectures, aimed at reducing security threats and facilitating humanitarian access. Religious, community, women and youth representatives have played a ket role in the success of these processes. These local peace plans also served as the foundation for local disarmament programmes. In Bangassou and Bria — cities that endured heavy violence in 2017 — the local peace process has encouraged the handover of over 1,000 weapons by armed groups and the participation of these groups in socioeconomic reintegration programmes. These local peace initiatives and the results they have achieved help create conditions conducive to the comprehensive peace process led by the African Initiative.

(*spoke in English*)

The restoration of State authority throughout the entire territory of the Central African Republic remains key to stabilizing the situation and setting the country on a path to long-term stability. The report before the Council today spells out the substantial progress made by the national authorities, including the deployment of prefects and sub-prefects, as well as other sectors of civil administration, with the support of the peacekeeping mission, the United Nations system and the country's other bilateral and institutional strategic partners. It is

important and essential that the State administration be increasingly visible and effective in the interior of the country. MINUSCA will continue to stand in support of these Government efforts.

I am particularly encouraged by the progressive deployment of magistrates in new areas of the country and the opening of tribunals outside of Bangui. Everywhere I have traveled in the Central African Republic, I have heard a constant demand for justice to help communities address criminality and to counter the country's long, sad history of impunity. The National Assembly recently adopted a law establishing the rules of procedure and evidence for the Special Criminal Court, as well as an amended law on the Court's establishment, organization and functioning. The judicial police officers attached to the Court have been hired and started their work. Those steps should allow the Court to commence investigations in the near future.

Despite the slow but steady progress to rebuild national courts, Central Africans have new hope that the perpetrators of the gravest crimes will finally face justice. Meanwhile, steps initiated by the Head of State to advance transitional justice are also encouraging. Justice and reconciliation must indeed progress simultaneously.

The gradual deployments of the Forces armées centrafricaines (FACA) and the gendarmerie and police outside Bangui have also contributed to increasing the State's capacity across the country. FACA units trained by the European Union Training Mission are slowly taking up positions in the interior of the country. In joint operations with MINUSCA in Paoua, Obo and Sibut, FACA has helped secure new areas, reduce violence by armed groups and address criminal activity. We will continue to work with the Government to ensure that newly reformed units of the Central African Armed Forces are professional and continue to reflect the ethnic diversity of the country, as well as to ensure that their deployments are coordinated with MINUSCA and other partners, within the framework of planned reform of the security sector. It is in that context that the Secretary-General wrote to the Security Council, on 15 May, to ensure that MINUSCA's joint deployment with FACA forms the core of both a successful security response and an effective exit strategy.

I must once more bring to the Security Council's attention the persistently dire humanitarian situation in the Central African Republic. One in four Central Africans has had to abandon his or her home. Nearly 700,000 people remain internally displaced, while another 568,000 are refugees in neighbouring countries. In the meantime, attacks against humanitarian workers make the Central African Republic the deadliest humanitarian context in the world. During the latest outbreak of violence in Bambari, armed groups looted the offices of several humanitarian agencies, forcing them to suspend operations. The continuing attacks on humanitarians severely undermine their ability to provide vital assistance, with awful consequences for the Central African population and the functioning of essential social services in health and education.

The Central African people urgently need the assistance of international partners to fill the humanitarian funding gap. Only 4 per cent of the 2018 humanitarian response plan has been funded, leaving many priority regions without assistance. That needs to be addressed, and we are grateful for the continued support of the Security Council.

The risk of escalating violence in the Central African Republic and the unnecessary suffering inflicted on the population demand our continued full attention and support. The country cannot afford more clashes among armed groups seeking opportunity to pillage and exploit natural resources. It is not too late to stop that predatory behavior from eroding progress towards building an effective, accountable and inclusive Central African State. It is not too late to prevent religion and ethnicity from becoming the driving factor of conflict. At present, that is still the result of manipulation for political gains, which finds echo among vulnerable groups. It is by no means the general feeling among Central Africans.

As long as the hands of the State — the bedrock of legitimate force — are not stronger than the illegitimate groups and criminal organizations, our efforts to establish lasting peace and stability in the Central African Republic will continue to be seriously challenged. Central Africans remain desperate to see a functioning State and an end to the criminal activities of armed groups. While there are many positive steps, the progress has still been too slow, for understandable reasons, and remains under threat from those who seek private gains through violence.

Together with the African Initiative and other partners, MINUSCA will continue to support the

Central African Government to fulfil the legitimate aspirations of the majority of Central Africans, from all parts of the country and all communities, who hold the hope for the country's future. Our resolve remains strong, heeding the Secretary-General's call to all of us to remain engaged with a considerable dose of patience and dedication and in a spirit of sacrifice. With the support of a united Security Council and region, we will ensure that the vision and hopes of Central Africans for lasting peace, stability and shared prosperity become a reality.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank Mr. Onanga-Anyanga for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Mr. Nébié.

Mr. Nébié (*spoke in French*): I can see, Mr. President, from the ball on the table, which we can see even from here in Bangui, that you are also in the football spirit. I wish good luck to your national team, and may the best team win.

I would like to thank all the members of the Security Council for the invitation today, and especially for their continued support with regard to the situation in the Central African Republic.

My briefing will touch on five points: first, the activities of the panel of facilitators for the African Initiative for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic; secondly, the outcome of the second round; thirdly, the steps taken by the panel following the recent incidents; fourthly, the agenda for the preparations for the dialogue; and, fifthly, financing needs.

With regard to the panel's work, from 19 February to 1 April, the panel undertook a second visit to armed groups. Members will recall that I provided a partial report on 21 March while the panel was in the midst of its mission. The 14 armed groups all renewed their grievances, which can be summarized in 70 points that cover issues of defence, security, political matters, justice, reconciliation, humanitarian concerns and socioeconomic recovery. Following the mission, a report was presented to the country's President, Prime Minister and National Assembly, as well as to the diplomatic corps, the political parties, the victims' group and civil society. Recommendations were made to the Government for speeding up the implementation of various programmes, including on disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation (DDRR); the National Recovery and Peacebuilding Plan; and the deployment of State authority throughout the country.

Secondly, on the results of the second round, as I mentioned, we received 70 written, detailed grievances from 14 armed groups, which serve as a working paper for the Government. There was relative calm and acceptance of State authority in several parts of the country, including Kaga Bandoro, Birao, Kouki, Bria and Mobaye. Certain groups that initially did not endorse it also accepted the DDRR programme. In addition, it is important to note the commitment of the country's President to carefully consider the grievances.

Thirdly, with regard to the steps taken by the panel following the incidents in April and May, the unfortunate events in April in the PK5 neighbourhood resulted in fatalities and a number of injuries. Those incidents had consequences for the central part of the country, in Ndélé and Kaga Bandoro, where armed groups hoped for a coalition in order to approach Bangui. Given the gravity of the situation, from 15 May to 1 June, the panel engaged in intensive consultations with armed groups both in the centre of the country and in Bangui in order to remobilize them towards the African Initiative and to urge them not to succumb to escalation and confrontation. The panel also made contact with stakeholders, leaders and those with influence on the PK5 criminal group to dissuade them from conflation, rumours and chaos, with a view to restoring calm in the country and to provide an opportunity for dialogue as a way out the crisis. Such action, together with goodwill, including on the part of the diplomatic corps and the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA), resulted in the return to relative calm since mid-May. Since then, the panel has been working to step up the process, since the incidents that I mentioned, as well as the issue of the international agenda, has somewhat delayed our provisional timetable for convening the dialogue.

Fourthly, with regard to the timetable for preparing the dialogue, the panel is taking time to reflect on the preparation, in particular the convening and handling, of the dialogue. Preparing the armed groups for dialogue is taking place in terms of workshops to teach them basic negotiation skills, particularly on how to resolve the crisis peacefully. That has started and continues as I speak. In the context of preparing the Government delegation to the dialogue, tomorrow I will meet the Government delegation appointed to take

part in the dialogue. There is also the preparation of civil society actors to monitor the implementation of the agreement resulting from the dialogue. With regard to visits to former Presidents, the visit to President Djotodia took place in Cotonou on 8 June, while the one to President Bozizé is still to take place. There are also plans to organize visits to some countries of the Economic Community of Central African States. A little earlier, my brother Mr. Parfait Onanga-Anyanga told the Security Council a bit about the subregional repercussions of the crisis.

Following all that, the holding of the dialogue should therefore be successful and, in principle, the negotiations should lead to a consensus-based agreement that will cover the responsibilities of all parties, both Government and armed groups, the budgetary implications, the related timetable and activities and the follow-up mechanisms. The preparatory activities seek to create an atmosphere conducive to preparing the parties' minds for calm, tolerance and consideration of one another with a view to a peaceful, fruitful and high-quality dialogue. It is pointless to hurry today while minds are still not ready for dialogue. If we launch it immediately, we risk reaching an impasse. However, I believe that, with the preparation of the armed groups, it is already falling into place. I think that we are on the right track. By then, we will have visited the armed groups and, when our preparations with the Government are ready, we will be in a position to convene the dialogue.

Fifthly, on financing needs, the panel is determined to complete its work in the coming weeks, that is, as soon as possible, with the convening and the holding of the dialogue. However, despite the efforts to mobilize funds, we sorely lack financial resources. A sum of $3 million is needed for the remaining activities. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the United States of America, which has just disbursed $500,000 to the panel's funds. Participants will well understand that I am looking at the other members of the Security Council. I also thank the European Union, which is organizing the preparation workshops on behalf of the panel. I thank MINUSCA and Special Representative Onanga-Anyanga, who has worked tirelessly to support us. I would also like to thank the Peacebuilding Fund and the United Nations Development Programme for also supporting us.

In conclusion, in order not to take long — I have five minutes — I would like to underscore to the Security Council that failure is not an option. The only option is the success of the dialogue and a return to peace for the Central African people. To that end, a significant part of the peacekeeping and re-establishment of international peace and security falls to the members of the Security Council. It is up to them to take specific, concrete and robust measures and actions in support of the stakeholders of the international community on the ground so as to promote and accelerate a return to peace for the Central African people, who, I would emphasize, implore the Council to do its utmost to quite simply ensure them peace and freedom of movement in their country.

If the Security Council members step up their efforts and provide concrete support to the panel, at the next meeting on the Central African Republic I will be very happy to tell them that the dialogue has been held, a consensus-based agreement has been reached, a follow-up mechanism is in place, peace is no longer an empty word and the time frame for implementing activities under the agreement is in place. I thank the Security Council for its attention. I would like to reiterate my gratitude to my brother Mr. Onanga-Anyanga and the European Union for all the goodwill that we have seen on a daily basis. We work together with all the diplomatic missions represented here daily because we know that we are all bound by the same fate to the Central African Republic. Our common goal is to ensure that the Central African people emerge from the crisis, which has lasted too long. I assuure members that when we are in the field, the only demand made of us is that they want peace, to move freely in their own territory and for us to do our utmost for the Government and the armed groups to reach an understanding and give them peace. I thank the members of the Council and wish them all good luck and success in the meeting.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank Mr. Nébié for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Brigadier General Maio.

Brigadier General Maio: I am grateful and very honoured to have this opportunity to address the members of the Security Council on the redeployment of the Forces armées centrafricaines (FACA) and the operational and logistical support of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA). The European Union Military Training Mission in the Central African Republic (EUTM RCA) contributes

to defence sector reform as part of the security sector reform coordinated by MINUSCA. Our Mission mandate includes providing strategic advice, education and training to the Ministry of Defence and the Forces armées centrafricaines and supporting the Central African authorities in modernizing FACA as an self-sustainable, credible, accountable and ethnically balanced armed force that is under democratic control.

The EUTM RCA is now completing its first two-year mandate. We have completed the training, or the validation, of nearly 3,000 soldiers, including three infantry battalions. Our future two-year mandate, [illegible]s on the decision of Member States, [illegible]as to continue that training, enlarging our Mission area to a new training centre in Bouar, and to support the internal security forces. The EUTM RCA mandate establishes the need for close coordination with MINUSCA, including our role as an advisory body on defence issues for the redeployment of FACA countrywide. All political actors and international partners agree on the necessity to restore State authority quickly throughout the country as a key factor in resolving the crisis. Therefore, the progressive redeployment of the armed forces, as well as the internal security forces, is recognized as an urgent key element that would enable public institutions and services to be restored to the entire territory, deter armed groups and foster conditions for reconciliation and peace.

The Council may be aware that armed forces trained by EUTM have already started to deploy operations with the support of MINUSCA in Obo, Paoua, Sibut, and recently, in Bangassou. Despite considerable logistical and tactical capabilities constraints, all operations are ongoing. Last week, the number of FACA personnel deployed out of Bangui reached 638. Reports on their performance in the joint operations have been favourable, both from the operational perspective and on the part of non-governmental organizations and public opinion.

FACA troops trained or validated by EUTM are now being armed and equipped by third States. We should not lose momentum in their redeployment and operationalization. To that end, MINUSCA remains a critical element. Continued support to FACA in joint deployments in limited military operations is essential. As the letter of the Secretary-General states,

> "It is important to note that, should the operational and logistical support outlined not be provided by MINUSCA or through bilateral agreements, the ability of these Central African armed forces and accompanying police and gendarmerie to perform critical security tasks entrusted to them, and progress in the political process and stabilization of the country, may be significantly undermined." (*S/2018/463, para. 38*)

Therefore, we stand by the recommendations on operational and logistical support outlined in paragraph 32 of the same letter.

However, it is important to bear in mind the limits of FACA's immediate deployment, resulting from logistical and command-and-control difficulties to manage a multiplicity of operations across the vast territory of the Central African Republic. Therefore, immediate deployments must be considered a transition phase, complemented by the garrison deployment, which is the base model for the new FACA, as established in the national defence plan. Garrison-model deployment will allow FACA to sustain operations if needed in the designated areas, thereby reassuring the population and contributing to a safe and secure environment. Nevertheless, garrison deployment will represent a major effort, especially with regard to infrastructure and sustained capabilities.

The first step should be taken in Bouar, as an entry point for subsequent operations in western Central African Republic, thereby allowing control in a region that is critical to the country's economy. Bouar will be established in accordance with the garrison model, where the authorities of the Central African Republic plan to deploy a battalion-size unit and create a non-commissioned officer school and training centre in close coordination with EUTM. The European Union is firmly committed to that plan and will be responsible for essential infrastructure projects. Other countries or international organizations could support similar projects in other regions of the Central African Republic, in accordance with the national defence plan signed by President Touadera.

Last by not least, I would like to draw the Council's attention to the importance of the African initiative for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic. Despite the progress made in the FACA build-up, the crisis in the Central African Republic will not be resolved by military force. The increase of FACA capabilities and its operational deployment contribute to the creation of conditions conducive to the political

negotiations process, leading to national reconciliation. In that context, the commitment of the countries of the region and the implementation of the disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation process are absolutely essential if peace is to be achieved in the Central African Republic.

In conclusion, MINUSCA support for the FACA redeployment is of the utmost importance. In that way the Government's plans for its armed forces, based on the garrisoning of forces already trained or validated by EUTM, will perhaps be made possible and enable the authority of the State to be extended and exercised. National reconciliation is the ultimate goal in order to create the conditions for a MINUSCA exit strategy from the Central African Republic.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank Brigadier General Maio for his briefing.

I shall now give the floor to those members of the Council who wish to make a statement.

Mr. Delattre (France) (*spoke in French*): I would like to sincerely thank our three briefers for their very insightful statements, which highlight the attention that the Security Council must continue paying to the situation in the Central African Republic.

France is concerned about the ongoing acts of violence committed by armed groups in Bangui and in surrounding areas against civilian populations, humanitarian workers and the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA). We are also concerned about efforts to incite hatred and violence and to use religion for criminal purposes. We will continue to closely monitor developments in the situation. In that regard, we believe that it is essential that the Security Council continue to show its full support for President Touadera and the Central African authorities in their efforts to foster national reconciliation and restore State authority, which are both key to the success of the process under way. It is also vital to continue to encourage the Central African authorities to work to restore justice, disarm armed groups and rebuild the country's economy. As worrisome as the current situation is, we should not disregard the fact that progress has been made and that a solution to the crisis is possible.

Violence perpetrated by armed groups continues to destabilize the country. It is accompanied by unacceptable human rights violations and causes the humanitarian situation to continue to deteriorate. It is therefore essential that all armed groups in Bangui and in the rest of the country stop all efforts to destabilize the country, as they are at variance with the commitments made before the panel of facilitators of the African Initiative for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic.

The Council's message to armed groups must be extremely strong. They must lay down their weapons and make an immediate and unconditional commitment to the peace process. They should know that they will not go unpunished for the violence they perpetrate. I recall that the Security Council has tools to impose sanctions on those who seek to undermine the stability of the Central African Republic and are responsible for inciting violence and attacks against civilians, humanitarian workers or MINUSCA. In that regard, I would also like to underscore the urgency of implementing the far-reaching African Initiative road map in order to reach a comprehensive political agreement.

Following the two field missions to meet with the armed groups, it is now vital to move towards direct discussions with the Central African Government and the armed groups within a framework of an inclusive dialogue with other segments of Central African society, in particular women, whose participation in the peace process is crucial. To that end, we call upon the African Union and all States of the region to continue providing support at the highest level so as to ensure that the next steps to implement the road map will be successful.

All efforts to bring about peace and stability in the Central African Republic also depend on the restoration of State authority in all administrative, security or judicial areas. It is therefore more vital than ever to continue to provide support to rebuild the Central African defence and security forces. We call on our Security Council partners to support the option for MINUSCA to assist the Central African forces trained by the European Union Military Training Mission in the Central African Republic (EUTM-RCA) in their gradual and managed redeployment. That is an essential point to restore the authority of the State, on which all else hinges. Last November, in resolution 2387 (2017), the Council requested the Secretary-General to prepare recommendations on the subject, and they were provided on 15 May. It is now up to us to study those recommendations in detail to then implement them. I

take this opportunity to commend the excellent work carried out by EUTM-RCA.

I would like to conclude my statement by reaffirming France's full support for MINUSCA and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Parfait Onanga-Anyanga, for their exemplary efforts. MINUSCA operates in a difficult environment but plays an indispensable role, whether in protecting civilians, supporting the peace and reconciliation process, facilitating the delivery of humanitarian aid or supporting the Central African Republic's recovery. Unfortunately, the Blue Helmets pay a heavy price for their commitment; five have been killed since the beginning of the year. I would like to once again pay tribute to them and to all troop- and police-contributing countries.

In that context, while new contingents have arrived in the Central African Republic, and others will soon follow, to strengthen MINUSCA, France stresses the importance of using those additional reinforcements, as authorized by resolution 2387 (2017), to give MINUSCA greater mobility and manoeuvring capabilities, particularly in the protection of civilians. In that sense, with regard to the protection of civilians, France welcomes the efforts undertaken by MINUSCA to improve its performance and continue the work already under way with troop-contributing countries to prevent cases of sexual exploitation and abuse and ensure that they do not go unpunished. Those efforts must continue.

Lastly, France remains very attentive to the issue of children in armed conflict in the Central African Republic, and welcomes the progress achieved by MINUSCA, especially with the signing of an action plan by 1 of the 14 armed groups to put an end to grave violations against children, including their recruitment and sexual violence, and the release of several thousand child soldiers since 2014.

I would like to conclude my statement by reiterating the importance for the Council and the international community to remain mobilized and united with a view to achieving lasting peace in the Central African Republic. Maintaining our mobilization and unity is a precondition to a lasting solution to the crisis, which is within our collective reach.

Mr. Tenya (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation welcomes the convening of this meeting and thanks Mr. Parfait Onanga-Anyanga, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA), for his briefing. We also welcome the participation of Mr. Bédializoun Moussa Nébié and Brigadier General Herminio Teodoro Maio.

Peru notes with concern that the efforts to restore the presence of the State and promote internal reconciliation have not yet succeeded in consolidating adequate responses to the serious deterioration of security in much of the country and to the dramatic humanitarian situation of its population. Most of the country is living in a state of permanent conflict as a result of an increase in inter-ethnic violence, access to weapons and the struggle for control of natural resources waged among armed groups, as well as the promotion of messages inciting religious violence, hatred and stigmatization. That has led to the continued attacks on the civilian population, MINUSCA personnel and humanitarian workers, which have spread to the country's capital. The Central African Republic is today one of the most dangerous and difficult environments.

In that context, we highlight the vital joint efforts that MINUSCA and the European Union are carrying out in training Central African military and police forces, such as projects on the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants and security sector reform. It is essential to provide those forces with the necessary operational and logistical support.

The difficult socioeconomic reality also contributes to the country's instability. That is why it is critical that the international community back the Government's efforts as embodied in the National Recovery and Peacebuilding Plan and the Mutual Engagement Framework. We especially believe that it is crucial to generate employment, particularly for young people, in order to prevent their recruitment into violent groups. In that regard, we highlight the role of the panel of facilitators of the African Initiative for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic in promoting dialogue between armed groups and civil society.

It is also essential to create synergies between the United Nations and relevant regional organizations and neighbouring countries with a view to coordinating efforts in favour of political processes and border crime control. In that regard, we welcome the joint visit of Mr. Jean-Pierre Lacroix and Mr. Smail Chergui to the

Central African Republic in April, and we agree with the Secretary-General on the need to revive the bilateral joint commissions of the Central African Republic, Cameroon, Chad and the Sudan.

Those efforts should be complemented by a robust judicial system, which is why we recognize the efforts of the Central African authorities to operationalize their judicial institutions, especially the Special Criminal Court and the national human rights commission, with a view to generating strong action against various types of abuse, including cases of sexual violence and the involvement of children in the conflict.

Peru wishes to highlight MINUSCA's sensitive functions in an adverse and complex environment. We believe that its operational capabilities — as the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of MINUSCA mentioned earlier — must be strengthened, and we therefore stress the need to ensure the safety of the Blue Helmets on the ground. In that regard, we look forward to the results of the Mission's strategic review.

To conclude, I stress the importance of undertaking an inclusive political process by the Central African authorities involving men and women of different social, economic, ethnic and religious backgrounds. The solution to the crisis in the Central African Republic can be found only through dialogue and national reconciliation among the Central Africans themselves.

Mr. Ndong Mba (Equatorial Guinea) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, our delegation thanks and commends Mr. Parfait Onanga-Anyanga, Special Representative of the Secretary-General; Mr. Bédializoun Moussa Nébié, Special Representative of the African Union to the Central African Republic; and Brigadier General Hermínio Teodoro Maio, Force Commander of the European Union Military Training Mission in the Central African Republic, for their detailed briefings on the reality of recent events in the Central African Republic and the overall situation in the country.

The Government of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea is concerned about the resurgence of violence and virulence with which ex-Séléka and anti-balaka armed groups control much of the country and attack civilian and military targets, resulting in hundreds of deaths and many injuries, through their operations in the PK5 neighbourhood and other parts of the country. The armed groups continue to focus their attacks on humanitarian workers and peacekeepers of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) in Tagbara, north-east of Bambari, which we strongly condemn, while expressing our deepest and most heartfelt condolences to the bereaved families, peacekeepers and MINUSCA. These constant acts are aimed at trying to prevent MINUSCA from fulfilling its mandate and commitments to the international community. We believe that these deliberate attacks on the United Nations peacekeeping forces are totally unacceptable, must be condemned and constitute a war crime, and the perpetrators must be held accountable to international justice.

We also believe that the Government and national authorities of our sister Central African Republic must enjoy the strong support of the international community so that it can promote and pursue the priorities, strategies and activities aimed at achieving, strengthening and promoting peace. We underscore that this process must include the full and effective participation of all political and social stakeholders and of the civilian population, irrespective of ethnic background, gender, language, religion, politics or other opinions. It is essential to advance this process, achieve the desired objectives and ensure that the socioeconomic and cultural needs of all sectors of society are taken into account.

The Republic of Equatorial Guinea reiterates its call on all armed groups to lay down their weapons, abandon all forms of violence and destabilizing activities, and commit themselves to the African Initiative for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic, whose adopted road map is the result of the coordinated efforts of the authorities of the Central African Republic, the African Union, the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region and the Community of Sant'Egidio, together with the support of several countries of the region, as well as the direct and indirect support provided by the international community, which makes the road map the principle framework for achieving a political solution to the crisis in the Central African Republic.

We welcome with optimism and commend the decision agreed by the Economic Community of Central African States and the Economic Community of West African States during their meeting in Lomé to hold a joint summit, in July, on peace, security and combating radicalization and violent extremism. We also appreciate the joint visit to the Central

African Republic by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Central Africa and the Secretary-General of ECCAS, during which they reiterated the support of the United Nations and ECCAS for the African Initiative for Peace and Reconciliation. During the meeting between the two senior officials and President Touadera, they welcomed the decision of the Central African Government to reactivate the joint commissions among the Central African Republic, Cameroon, Chad and the Sudan to address regional security issues.

The Republic of Equatorial Guinea supported in its time the renewal of MINUSCA's mandate until 15 November, and we closely followed and praised the work of Special Representative of the United Nations, Mr. Parfait Onanga-Anyanga, with various groups and with national authorities, MINUSCA and other stakeholders. Those efforts are vital in order to focus increasingly on developing synergies and common ground among the various actors operating in the territory to better coordinate of their activities.

We commend the training provided to the units of the Forces armées centrafricaines, which could support the efforts of MINUSCA, thereby contributing to strengthening the authority of the State. We therefore call for the lifting of the obstacles to the rearmament of the Forces armées centrafricaines.

It would be remiss of me to end this statement without underscoring the deteriorating humanitarian and human rights situation, which directly affects vulnerable people, in particular women and children, and has resulted in an increase in the number of Central Africans seeking refuge in neighbouring countries, including Chad, Cameroon and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

We conclude this statement by emphasizing once again that, among the myriad tasks set forth in MINUSCA's mandate, the protection of civilians and support for the central Government and its armed forces must be prioritized so that the Government can exercise its authority over the entire national territory. To that end and to reiterate a point made by Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Parfait Onanga-Anyanga, it is vital that broad and resolute support be lent to MINUSCA so that it can carry out the huge and very complex mission that has been conferred upon it by our Council.

The Republic of Equatorial Guinea reiterates its full support for our sister Central African Republic in its efforts to address violence and in its genuine desire to achieve sustainable peace through inclusive dialogue and national reconciliation. We congratulate the Government of the Central African Republic for the slow but steady progress it is making towards restoring its authority throughout the entire country.

Mr. Allen (United Kingdom): At the outset, allow me to thank our briefers, Special Representative of the Secretary-General Mr. Onanga-Anyanga, Special Representative Nébié and Brigadier General Maio, for their briefings and their and their teams continued efforts in the Central African Republic. We know how difficult and challenging their missions are, as is the context they are operating in.

Let me also take this opportunity to offer my condolences on behalf of the British Government to the family of the peacekeeper who lost his life in Bambari last week. That senseless death, one of three in the past five weeks, serves to illustrate the deteriorating security situation in the Central African Republic, which concerns the United Kingdom, like other Security Council members, very deeply.

Security in areas that were once considered relatively stable — for example, Bambari and Bangui — has deteriorated. We commend the efforts of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) to respond to and quell the violence and uphold their mandate to protect civilians.

Today, as the report of the Secretary-General's (S/2018/611) states, a quarter of the population have been driven from their homes as they seek safety. There are now more internally displaced people in the Central African Republic than at any other point in the country's history. Over half of the population is in need of humanitarian assistance. Seventy per cent of families do not have access to clean water and 80 per cent of families do not have access to latrines. Despite that, only 20 per cent of the humanitarian response plan has been funded. The United Kingdom has given $9 million so far in 2018, and we encourage all Member States to respond to that appeal.

We call on all armed groups in Bangui and throughout the country to immediately cease all forms of violence, but we also urge political, religious and community leaders to stop incitement to violence on

religious and ethnic grounds. We have seen the tragic consequences of such calls to violence over the past few months. Those in positions of leadership have particular responsibility for their words. The authorities and the international community must hold accountable those involved in attacks, violations of international humanitarian law and abuses and violations of human rights. We must send a clear message that this behaviour is not acceptable and that there will be consequences, as the national justice system continues to develop and the Special Criminal Court makes progress towards operationalization through the enactment of a new legal framework and the appointment of judicial police officers.

We welcome the progress made in extending States' authority to all areas of the country, including through the recent redeployment of civil servants and justice representatives, and we recognize the real challenge of doing so. The deployment of the Forces armées centrafricaines units trained by the European Union Military Training Mission (EUTM) in the Central African Republic is an important step. We commend the EUTM's efforts to support the re-establishment of a cohesive and well-trained national security force. That is not only essential for peace and security in the short term; a well-trained force that respects human rights will help to build trust between civilians and the Government of the Central African Republic, and thereby help to mend the social fabric, which has been deeply damaged by the conflict.

As we have discussed in the Council many times, an inclusive political peace process is the best way to address the grievances of all parties to ensure long-term peace and security. We very much welcome and support the African Union's (AU) leadership on that issue through the African Initiative for Peace and Reconciliation. The visit to take stock of armed groups' grievances was a good step. The regional credibility of the African Union allows it to positively engage with all groups, and we strongly encourage the AU to continue its good work. We should reflect on how we the Security Council and the international community can best support the African Union and enhance and support the peace initiative. The United Kingdom is open to the African Union's suggestions on how the Council and the international community can play a more supportive role, and we look forward to the interactive dialogue later.

Ms. Schoulgin Nyoni (Sweden): Let me also thank our three briefers for their informative and useful briefings today.

Let me start by reiterating our full support for United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA), which is carrying out its work in increasingly difficult circumstances. Since February, security incidents have resulted in the deaths of four peacekeepers. We express our profound condolences to their families for their loss. It is essential that attacks against peacekeepers be investigated and those responsible be brought to justice. In that regard, we appreciate the cooperation of the Central African Republic authorities to ensure accountability for those attacks.

In the light of the fragile advances made over the past two years, we are deeply worried about the deterioration in the security situation in recent months. That has been marked by persistent violence by armed groups, including in Bangui, and we strongly condemn attacks carried out against civilians, humanitarian personnel and peacekeepers. We are also deeply concerned about the erosion of trust among communities, as well as the sectarian rhetoric that seeks to divide societies and incite religious and ethnic hatred. Attempts by armed groups — not least of which the Front populaire pour la renaissance de la Centrafrique — and political actors to fan division and discord for political ends is reckless and worrisome. We are also concerned about the high number of documented incidents of human rights violations and abuses and violations of international humanitarian law. Impunity for acts of violence against civilians, including sexual and gender-based violence, cannot be tolerated. Strong national leadership and communication are imperative at this juncture. The efforts of the Government to ensure national unity continue to have our support. It is essential that the Government, Parliament and armed groups all demonstrate their commitment to national reconciliation and engage in dialogue.

We strongly support the African Initiative for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic and welcome the conclusion of the second round of consultations. We hope that the African Union will continue to prioritize advancing the initiative. As it does so, it should fully use its mediation capacity, with the active support from the United Nations, and ensure the implementation of the Libreville road map.

We encourage countries in the region to step up coordinated efforts in support for the endeavours of the Government of the Central African Republic towards peace and stability. Those includes support for the African Initiative as well as efforts to address cross-border challenges, such as transhumance-related violence. The Government's steps to reactivate bilateral joint commissions with a number of neighbouring countries is a welcome step in that direction. An inclusive peace is a credible and sustainable peace. It is crucial that all segments of society — not least women and youth — be engaged in the political process, and that key stakeholders, in addition to armed groups, be included. In parallel to the political process, it is necessary to enhance national reconciliation and transitional justice efforts so as to lay the ground for sustainable peace and stability. The dire humanitarian situation in the country has been further exacerbated by clashes among armed groups and attacks against civilians. We urge all armed groups to fully commit to dialogue and cease all forms of violence. Efforts to respond to the needs of more than half the population now in need of humanitarian assistance must be stepped up.

We welcome the letter of the Secretary-General (S/2018/463) in May on recommendations on the type of support MINUSCA could provide for the progressive deployment of units of the Central African armed forces — trained or certified by the European Union (EU) Training Mission. It is important to ensure cooperation between the United Nations and the EU Training Mission, in particular if MINUSCA is to provide enhanced planning and technical assistance to the Central African armed forces. The Central African authorities must ensure that the members of the Central African Armed Forces are ethnically representative, geographically balance and financially supported and that they adhere to the rule of law and human rights standards. Furthermore, the deployment of armed forces is merely one part of the re-establishment of State authority throughout the country. It must be quickly followed by the provision of basic services in line with the National Strategy for the Restoration of State Authority. That requires not only sustained support from the international community but, crucially, political will and a sense of national ownership from the Central African authorities.

Mrs. Gregoire Van Haaren (Netherlands) (*spoke in French*): I thank the three briefers for the clarity of their statements this morning. I believe that they demonstrated how the United Nations, the African Union and the European Union are working together in close cooperation for peace in the Central African Republic. I also thank their teams, which are made up of people who devote all their efforts and energy in the service of achieving lasting peace.

I join other delegations in conveying our condolences to the families and Governments of the Blue Helmets of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) who lost their lives. I would like to say that today their work is more necessary than ever. The Kingdom of the Netherlands is concerned about and condemns the escalation of intercommunal violence and attacks against civilians, MINUSCA and humanitarian workers. Today I will focus on three aspects of how to respond to the crisis: first, the need to strengthen our support for the African Initiative for Peace and Reconciliation; secondly, the need to protect civilians and prevent incitement to violence; and, thirdly, the imperative redeployment of the Central African Armed Forces.

My first point concerns the peace process conducted under the African Initiative. The Netherlands welcomes the work of Mr. Nebié and the panel of facilitators. In particular, we welcome the holding of consultations with armed groups. However, the increase in violence is undermining the peace process. We firmly condemn such acts and call on armed groups to lay down their weapons. The security of the people in Central Africa must improve so that an inclusive dialogue to achieve peace can begin. We encourage the African Union and MINUSCA to continue working in close cooperation in complementarity. We welcome MINUSCA's efforts to arrive at local agreements and support local initiatives to promote peace. Moreover, the Netherlands welcomes the initiative of President Touadera to reactivate the three bilateral joint commissions between the Central African Republic and Cameroon, Chad and the Sudan. We call on the countries of the region to constructively commit to aggressively confronting the cross-border roots underlying the conflict in the Central African Republic.

Secondly, I underscore the urgent need to protect civilians. They continue to be the first targets in the relentless violence. The protection of civilians must remain MINUSCA's priority. We encourage the Mission to further strengthen its early-warning mechanisms,

but it alone cannot stop the threat of hateful rhetoric, which is toxic to peace in the Central African Republic. The Government of the Netherlands calls on the Central African Government, as well as political and religious leaders, to act to end incitement to violence. We welcome the recent declaration issued by the High Council for Communication and encourage the operationalization of its Office. There can be no peace without justice. In that regard, the progress of the Special Criminal Court is commendable, in particular the adoption of the rules of procedure and evidence.

My third point concerns the importance of strengthening State authority, which is necessary for achieving a lasting solution. The Kingdom of the Netherlands welcomes the contribution of the European Union Military Training Mission (EUTM) to the training of the Central African Armed Forces. We recognize, however, that more support is needed to redeploy the EUTM-trained forces. We welcome the recent letter from the Secretary-General describing the conditions under which MINUSCA could play a role in that regard (S/2018/463). We believe that in the current circumstances it is crucial that the Council take a decision on this matter as soon as possible. We call on all international partners contributing to the redeployment of security forces to strengthen their coordination efforts.

We are alarmed, as is the Secretary-General, by the increase in intercommunal violence. A few weeks ago, a young Central African woman working for peace showed us the threats she receives every day on social networks. No one should fear for their lives because of their ethnic origin or religion. We must prevent this conflict from escalating.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate my thanks to the Special Representative, Mr. Onanga-Anyanga, for his considerable efforts and leadership.

Mr. Djédjé (Côte d'Ivoire) (*spoke in French*): First of all, I would like to thank Mr. Parfait Onanga-Anyanga for his excellent briefing, and Mr. Bédializoun Moussa Nébié and Brigadier General Herminio Teodoro Maio for the quality of theirs.

My delegation welcomes the progress made in restoring State authority throughout the country, in particular through the deployment of the majority of the prefectural corps, of judges and of over 50 per cent of civil servants, as well as the improvement in the provision of basic social services. However, the security and humanitarian situation remains worrisome, despite commendable efforts by the Government and the international community. The resurgence of inflammatory rhetoric, the persistence of intercommunal conflicts and attacks by armed groups against the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) and humanitarian workers remain of concern. Côte d'Ivoire condemns those acts and, in its capacity as Chair of the Sanctions Committee concerning the Central African Republic, recalls the relevant provisions of resolution 2399 (2018), which set out as criteria for the designation of sanctions the incitement to hatred and violence as well as attacks against civilian populations, MINUSCA soldiers and humanitarian personnel. My country calls on the stakeholders to strictly respect the relevant provisions of resolution 2399 (2018) and to engage in the search for a peaceful solution to the crisis, within the framework of the African Initiative for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic.

It is essential that national ownership and inclusiveness in the political process be emphasized, which is why, while welcoming local peace and reconciliation initiatives, my delegation also advocates for robust involvement by civil society organizations, ethnic and religious communities, women and young people in the ongoing political dialogue.

Côte d'Ivoire supports the efforts of the Central African Government and commends the leadership of President Touadera, who favours dialogue and consultation both within the Central African Republic and with neighbouring States, in order to create the conditions for national reconciliation and a real commitment by the parties concerned to lasting peace in the country. In that regard, my country notes with satisfaction the Government's efforts to revive the joint bilateral commissions with Chad, Cameroon and the Sudan, with a view to addressing cross-border security challenges.

Pooling efforts in the face of the challenges of insecurity and instability is crucial. My delegation therefore welcomes the joint operations by MINUSCA and the Central African Armed Forces, which, according to the Secretary-General's report (S/2018/611), have significantly reduced the number of attacks against civilians and clashes between armed groups in several regions. In that regard, my country supports the request addressed to the Security Council by the

Secretary-General on 15 May 2018 (S/2018/463), with a view to generating enhanced support for MINUSCA for the gradual and controlled redeployment of the Central African Armed Forces trained or certified by the European Union Training Mission in the Central African Republic (EUTM). Côte d'Ivoire also encourages the donor community to support the efforts of the Government of the Central African Republic within the framework of the joint five-year concept for the immediate and long-term deployment of the defence and internal security forces, adopted in 2018 with the support of MINUSCA and in coordination with EUTM.

My delegation would like to stress the importance of accountability in the search for lasting solutions to the Central African crisis, which is having a negative impact on the entire subregion. It therefore welcomes the Government's efforts aimed at operationalizing the truth, justice, reparations and reconciliation commission. It also welcomes the adoption, on 29 May, of the law enabling the Special Criminal Court to begin its work and investigations into war crimes and crimes against humanity committed in the Central African Republic since 2003.

In conclusion, Côte d'Ivoire would like to reiterate its support for MINUSCA. We remain convinced that ownership of the African Initiative for Peace and Reconciliation by the Central African stakeholders, with the support of the international community, is the appropriate and sustainable way out of the crisis.

Mr. Cohen (United States of America): I thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Onanga-Anyanga, Special Representative Nébié and Commander Maio for their detailed briefings this morning.

The United States expresses its deepest condolences for the Tanzanian peacekeeper who died on 3 June and the Burundian peacekeeper who died on 10 June. We also extend our hope for a speedy recovery to those injured in the latest attacks.

The collective goal of the international community must be to achieve a political solution for durable peace and recovery in the Central African Republic. We need to work together to communicate positive progress where it is occurring and to counter narratives by spoilers who seek to de-stabilize the country for their own benefit. We remain committed to President Touadera and his Government. President Touadera continues to strive for peace, justice and accountability and the prevention of further atrocities, and we are pleased the Special Criminal Court for the Central African Republic is operational and ready to hold perpetrators accountable.

The African Union-led peace initiative offers a reasonable starting point for the parties to discuss and conclude a peace agreement. The United States supports this effort and is eager for the African Union (AU) to begin talks with and mediation among the parties to the conflict. We want to invigorate the process and believe the United Nations also needs to increase its engagement in it. A conference is needed to bring together the international community to develop a common strategy for supporting the peace process and the AU. We want to work to ensure that peace talks advance. There is no way ahead in the Central African Republic without a viable peace process backed by the international community.

We commend the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) for its local reconciliation efforts, and we highlight the need to harmonize those efforts with broader and similar peace initiatives by civil society organizations so as to ensure a coordinated multitrack approach to peacebuilding in the Central African Republic. We urge MINUSCA to work closely with the AU as those processes make progress.

MINUSCA's support to the Central African Armed Forces is important, and we remain focused on advancing State authority in the Central African Republic. The extension of State authority should continue to be closely linked with ongoing effective security sector reform and disarmament and demobilization programmes.

MINUSCA is a model for robust and proactive peacekeeping, but the Mission is stretched thin and struggles to fully implement its mandate. The environment in which MINUSCA is operating is incredibly complex. We hope that the upcoming strategic review will offer an honest assessment of the challenges facing the Mission. We cannot improve MINUSCA without a thoughtful analysis of the political and security environment in the Central African Republic and of how MINUSCA can achieve its objectives there.

We again offer our thanks to the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, the Special Representative of the African Union and the Force Commander, and to the men and women of MINUSCA for their service.

Mr. Almunayekh (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like to welcome our new colleague the representative of the United States of America. We wish him every success and look forward to working closely with him.

At the onset, I should like to thank Mr. Parfait Onanga-Anyanga, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Central African Republic and Head of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA); Mr. Bédializoun Moussa Nébié, Special Representative of the African Union to the Central African Republic; and Brigadier General Herminio Teodoro Maio, Force Commander of the European Union Military Training Mission in the Central African Republic for the valuable updates they have provided the Security Council.

I will focus in my statement today on three aspects.

First, with respect to the security situation, our meeting today is taking place in the context of an unstable security situation in the Central African Republic that has now entered its fifth year. Since April, the security situation has been deteriorating rapidly in a deeply concerning manner owing to the escalation of violence between armed groups and the conflicting parties. Once again there is resurgence of inflammatory rhetoric and hate speech, as well as religious and sectarian incitement. We are concerned at the recurrent violence and attacks committed by those extremist armed groups and gangs that target Muslim-majority areas as well as Muslim religious figures and places of worship, and burn mosques. We condemn in the strongest terms all attacks against people or their holy places because of their religion and denounce all acts of violence and killings as a result of radicalism. We call on the authorities of the Central African Republic to redouble their efforts to stop those actions and increase awareness among all segments of the population so as to put an end to such hate speech and create an environment conducive to coexistence.

Against this backdrop, the security situation in the Central African Republic is deteriorating, which we strongly deplore. Even humanitarian personnel and MINUSCA peacekeepers are being targeted, resulting in a number of dead among Mission staff and many wounded. These attacks have become a source of concern for us and require that we all focus on the security situation in the Central African Republic and support the efforts of President Touadera so that the Government forces can retake control of the security situation. We condemn in the strongest terms the recurrent armed attacks and call for an end thereto. We reiterate our support for all of the statements made by the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the statements to the press issued by the Security Council in the aftermath of the attacks that took place in recent months, as those attacks against peacekeepers could amount to war crimes and violations of international humanitarian law.

We call on the Government of the Central African Republic to investigate the attacks and hold the perpetrators accountable. We reiterate our support to Special Representative of the Secretary-General Parfait Onanga-Anyanga and to MINUSCA in their efforts to help the Government and the people of the Central African Republic to achieve lasting peace and stability.

Secondly, with respect to the humanitarian situation, we have followed the reports of international organizations regarding the humanitarian situation in the Central African Republic and taken note of the information contained in the recent report of the Secretary-General dated 18 June (S/2018/611), and deplore the fact that the humanitarian situation remains critical and that almost half of the country's population is in dire need of urgent humanitarian aid. The Central African Republic has thus become one of the countries most in need of humanitarian assistance, and half of those who are in need are children. As a result of the deterioration in the humanitarian situation, one of four people in the country is now facing a very critical situation. This is worrying and frightening.

Thirdly, cooperation is needed between the various relevant organizations and United Nations offices, including coordination and cooperation efforts between the African Union, the European Union and MINUSCA, in collaboration with the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa and the Economic Community of Central African States, to support security and stability in the Central African Republic. We reiterate, however, that it is very important to intensify such cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union in order to give impetus to the African Initiative for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic and to achieve tangible results that will eventually translate into stability in the security situation and reduction of violence in the country.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate our appreciation to Special Representative of the Secretary-General Parfait Onanga-Anyanga and the staff of MINUSCA for their determined efforts to help reinstate stability amid a precarious situation. We hope that they will succeed, for the sake of achieving security and stability for the people of Central African Republic.

Mr. Inchauste Jordán (Plurinational State of Bolivia) (*spoke in Spanish*): We would like to express our gratitude for the briefings by Special Representative of the Secretary-General Parfait Onanga-Anyanga; Mr. Bédializoun Moussa Nébié, Special Representative of the African Union to the Central African Republic; and Brigadier General Herminio Teodoro Maio, Force Commander of the European Union Military Training Mission in the Central African Republic, and we assure them of our full support in the delicate and complex tasks that they are carrying out.

The atmosphere of violence and insecurity created by armed groups in the Central African Republic continues to undermine the commendable efforts made and achievements registered by the Government in the areas of the protection of civilians, the strengthening of State authority, inter-institutional cooperation and the training of the Central African Armed Forces, inter alia. None of these achievements should be overlooked.

The Central African Republic, together with its regional and subregional parners and with the support of the international community, must continue to work in a unified manner in order to find long-term solutions that stabilize the country and achieve a lasting and sustainable peace.

We welcome and support the round of consultations carried out with 14 armed groups by the panel of facilitators for the African Initiative for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic. This undertaking promotes dialogue and serves to address the root causes of the instability and armed violence in the country. We call on all armed groups to undertake once and for all the process of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration. We also call on them to cease hostilities and to focus their efforts on activities that will benefit the civilian population and promote the stabilization of the Central African Republic.

We commend the support lent to the African Initiative and to the Government by the International Support Group on the Central African Republic and urge it to continue to promote consistent and sustained participation in order to contribute to the stabilization and recovery of the country as well as to ensure greater and enhanced coordination among regional and international partners. In a similar vein, we welcome the decision by the Government of the Central African Republic to reactivate the bilateral joint commissions with Cameroon, Chad and the Sudan, which we trust will serve to limit arms trafficking and the movement of armed groups.

The never-ending spiral of violence fuelled by armed groups, asymmetric attacks and the ongoing clashes between ethnic groups and communities are factors that day in and day out exacerbate the critical humanitarian situation. There are 670,000 displaced persons in the Central African Republic, and 580,000 refugees have fled to neighbouring countries. That situation cannot be ignored. We therefore call upon the international community to continue to provide support through predictable and sustainable financing, particularly to the humanitarian response plan, with a view to confronting the growing need for humanitarian assistance that the people require.

Bolivia condemns all acts that incite violence — especially those motivated by ethnic or religious reasons — and undermine peace, stability and security in the Central African Republic. In that connection, we commend the religious leaders of Bangui for having reached a preliminary agreement with local militias, civil society and local authorities to contain the violence in Bangassou.

We also condemn the attacks carried out by armed groups against civilians, the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) and peacekeeping forces. We appreciate and welcome the members of the Mission, as well as the military, police and civilian personnel, who carry out their work in a volatile environment of great risk. We regret the loss of life among both Mission personnel and civilians, and we take this opportunity to express our condolences to the family members and Governments of the fallen.

We applaud the efforts of the Mission to identify regions that lack additional capacity to protect their civilian population and to support the Government through peace and reconciliation initiatives, processes that provide frameworks to reduce violence, build trust among communities and facilitate the return of displaced persons. We also welcome the new civilian

protection strategy and efforts to mediate among armed groups. We support MINUSCA in its efforts to continue promoting the participation of women in the African Initiative and advocating for violence-reduction programmes, which have proved to be effective in the implementation of local peace agreements and the voluntary disarmament of many young people involved in militia and armed group activities.

Moreover, we encourage the joint five-year agreement to support the Government in the immediate and long-term deployment of internal defence and security forces with the support of MINUSCA and in coordination with the European Union Military Training Mission, with a view to restoring State authority in the Central African Republic.

In conclusion, we welcome the ongoing and active engagement of regional and subregional organizations, as well as the participation of African Union, the Economic Community of Central African States, the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region and the group of facilitators of the African Initiative, whose political efforts towards peace and cooperation are essential to the reconciliation process. All of that is being carried out in full respect for the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of the Central African Republic, as it is the Central Africans themselves who have the primary responsibility to achieve peace and stability in their own country.

Mr. Lewicki (Poland): Let me join you, Mr. President, in congratulating and welcoming Ambassador Cohen. We very much look forward to working with him closely.

We thank all three briefers for their very thorough and factual presentations. We wish to express our deep appreciation to them and their teams for their tireless efforts aimed at ensuring peace and stability in the Central African Republic, given all of the very challenging circumstances. Their presence and participation here in the Chamber is the best example of the excellent cooperation we enjoy with regard to the Central African Republic between the United Nations and the regional organizations. It is also an excellent example of the cooperation that can exist between the European Union and the African Union.

Let me also offer our most sincere condolences over the loss of life among Blue Helmets. All attacks on the peacekeeping personnel are unacceptable, and we hope that the perpetrators will be identified and held accountable. For Poland, as a Vice-Chair of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations, the safety and security of peacekeeping personnel continues to be the top priority.

Poland welcomes the progress made so far in the political process under the leadership of President Touadera. We applaud the support provided by the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) and the African Union, as well as the engagement of regional and subregional actors, in advancing the mediation and reconciliation process. We consider the African Initative for Peace and National Reconciliation to be the main framework for resolving the crisis in the Central African Republic. It is crucial that the process include all political, social and ethnic groups, as well as the representation of women. We commend the progress made by the panel of facilitators on consultations with armed groups, and remain positive that the Initiative could enhance the peace process in the country and lead to a lasting agreement.

Unfortunately, despite some positive developments, the security and humanitarian situation in the country has not improved. We strongly condemn repeated acts of violence targeting civilians, humanitarian workers and peacekeepers. We are also concerned about the increase in incitement to ethnic and religious hatred and violence. Such activities result in numerous casualties and impede the peace process and economic recovery.

Poland welcomes the efforts made by the Government and local communities to further enhance security measures, curb criminality and support reconciliation mechanisms, but much still remains to be done. We commend the Central African Republic authorities for the progress made in the establishment of a Special Criminal Court that would investigate allegations of war crimes and crimes against humanity during more than a decade of ethnic and religious conflict in the country. Those efforts bring hope for the possibility of breaking the cycle of revenge and violence in the Central African Republic and show the determination of the Central African Republic authorities in constituting a credible, legitimate and reliable judicial system.

It is extremely important to stop impunity and restore State control throughout the entire country. With regard to Mr. Onanga-Anyanga's briefing, we also welcome the progress in setting up the magistrates. In

our view, the return of public administration throughout the country's territory is crucial for ensuring the long-term stability of the Central African Republic, as building institutions based on the principles of good governance and the rule of law is key for economic, social and political development.

The fragile situation in the Central African Republic shows that comprehensive support from the international community is essential. In that context, we strongly believe that the active support of MINUSCA for the progressive redeployment of the Central African Armed Forces, trained by the European Union Military Training Mission, is crucial. Transparent and coordinated cooperation among all international forces in the Central African Republic is a critical means for ensuring a unified approach to the operationalization of the Central African Armed Forces and its compliance with the highest standards.

In conclusion, Poland praises the important work carried out by MINUSCA, the European Union Military Training Mission and other international partners in the Central African Republic. I would like to assure Mr. Onanga-Anyanga and his entire team of our full support for his efforts.

Mr. Alemu (Ethiopia): I wish to start by expressing our appreciation to Special Representative of the Secretary-General Parfait Onanga-Anyanga, Special Representative of the African Union (AU) to the Central African Republic Moussa Nébié and Brigadier General Herminio Teodoro Maio for their respective briefings.

Two years after the Government of President Touadera took office, we note the progress made by the Central African Republic towards a gradual restoration of State authority through the deployment of district administrations in all parts of the country, together with the return of basic social services. That progress should not be overlooked. However, as rightly stated by the Secretary-General in his report (S/2018/611) and stressed by Special Representative Onanga-Anyanga, whose work we greatly appreciate, such gains remain slow and fragile. What worries us most is the fact that the first half of this year has witnessed a deterioration of the security situation despite the incremental change that we have seen in other areas.

Today I want to take this opportunity to highlight what emerged from the discussion at the level of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa, which we chair. Based on the suggestion of members of the Security Council, we organized a series of discussions on specific conflict situations in Africa, not so much to rework the discussion that takes place here in the Council but to facilitate a genuine exchange of views on how to support national and regional efforts in the spirit of African solutions to African problems.

In that context, we convened a meeting last month to discuss the situation in the Central African Republic and how to prevent a reversal of the gains made and to sustain peace. Assistant Secretary-General Keita, the African Union Special Representative, the Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission configuration and the Permanent Representative of the Central African Republic, whose presence here today we very much welcome, briefed the Ad Hoc Working Group. Unlike at previous meetings, the discussion that followed truly lived up to expectations, with members frankly sharing their views in a much more interactive manner.

That is why we felt that we needed to bring that to the attention of the Security Council so that the outcome of the discussion at the level of the Ad Hoc Working Group feeds into our deliberations here today. Serious concern was expressed about the deteriorating security and humanitarian situation and the socioeconomic challenges, particularly over the past two months, as well as the danger of inflammatory rhetoric and sectarian violence. Serious concern was expressed in that connection with regard to the role of non-citizens fanning the conflict through the use of incendiary language. Much of that is resource-driven and was seen as a very serious challenge.

The illegal exploitation of minerals and other resources, primarily as the main source of funds for supporting the operation of the armed groups, including with the assistance of actors near and far, was also raised as an alarming development. Furthermore, the growing number of attacks against the peacekeepers of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) and their impact in hindering efforts towards the gradual restoration of State authority in the country was considered very disturbing.

In terms of the way forward, the importance of promoting dialogue and reconciliation through engagement with the local community, as well as supporting the expansion of State authority, in particular in remote areas, including by strengthening the capacity

of the Government and its reconciliation efforts, was greatly emphasized. That is no substitute for addressing that and other challenges, as Special Representative Onanga-Anyanga also stressed a short while ago. Promoting dialogue with neighbouring countries to ensure border security was also underscored. That was highlighted as extremely critical.

Members expressed support for the AU's efforts in the context of the African Initiative for Peace and Reconciliation and stressed the need to leverage the United Nations and AU synergy, welcoming the recent joint visit by Under-Secretary-General Lacroix and Commissioner Chergui. With regard to MINUSCA, the fact that the Mission needs a more robust posture, adequately resourced with the necessary financial and logistical support, was very well recognized. We heard Special Representative Onanga-Anyanga say that as well in his briefing a short while ago.

In the end, what emerged very clearly during the discussion was that the Central African Republic requires greater attention from the Council. That clearly appears to be self-evident given the current situation and the need to do everything possible to prevent a reversal of the little progress made over the past two years.

Mr. Yao Shaojun (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): China thanks Mr. Onanga-Anyanga, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Central African Republic, Mr. Nébié, Special Representative of the African Union to the Central African Republic, and Brigadier General Herminio Teodoro Maio, Force Commander of the European Union Military Training Mission, for their briefings.

Under the leadership of President Touadera, the political process in the Central African Republic has made positive progress. Meanwhile, the security situation in the country remains fragile, with continuing armed clashes among armed groups. The country therefore still faces challenges in its effort to achieve lasting peace and stability. Recently, the second round of consultations under the African Initiative for Peace and Reconciliation was held successfully.

China welcomes that development. We call on the relevant parties to bear in mind the overall national and State interests, to take concrete steps to implement a ceasefire agreement, to promote disarmament and the peace and reconciliation process, to stop the incitement of hatred, and to overcome differences through dialogue and consultation.

China commends the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) for its important role in maintaining stability in the Central African Republic. We strongly condemn the attacks against peacekeepers and express our condolences and sympathy to the bereaved families. We support the Government of the Central African Republic in conducting prompt investigations in order to bring the perpetrators to justice.

China also supports MINUSCA's efforts to improve its protection and early-warning capability and to take concrete and effective steps to ensure the safety and security of its personnel. China supports the African Union, the Economic Community of Central African States and other regional and subregional organizations in their efforts to promote a political process in the Central African Republic. The United Nations, the African Union and other regional and subregional organizations should enhance their cooperation with the Government of the Central African Republic so as to promote national reconciliation and peace in the country in a joint effort to help it to achieve peace and development as soon as possible. China also calls on the international community to continue to support to the Government of the Central African Republic in its State capacity-building efforts and to provide the necessary assistance to the Government in order to maintain security and stability, respond to the humanitarian crisis and address the root causes of the conflict.

Mr. Tumysh (Kazakhstan): We would like to thank our three briefers and welcome Ambassador Jonathan Cohen, the new Deputy Permanent Representative of the United States, to the Chamber today. We wish him every success. My delegation has the following comments to make.

First, with regard to the political front, we note the efforts and commitment of the Government of the Central African Republic to making progress in restoring State authority throughout the country, despite its persistent challenges, which include limited resources, weak public institutions and insecurity, as other speakers, including my Polish colleague, have pointed out. Like Ambassador Alemu of Ethiopia, as expressed in his inspiring and meaningful statement, we too are concerned about the intensifying sectarian rhetoric and

intercommunal disputes, which have resulted in higher levels of armed conflict, thereby undermining every effort to achieve national reconciliation and worsening the country's already fragile security situation. We note the work of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) in supporting peace initiatives at the local community level with the aim of building confidence and reducing violence.

We also pay tribute to the panel of facilitators for the African Initiative for Peace and Reconciliation and note the importance of continuing a dialogue with armed groups and seeking peaceful means of disarmament. We therefore join others in urging all armed groups to lay down their arms. We recognize the role that President Touadera has taken in leading and supporting peaceful political processes within the framework of the African Initiative. The first meeting of the International Support Group on the Central African Republic, with the participation of the African Union (AU), the Economic Community of Central African States and the United Nations, is an important step in that direction. Coordinating the actions of regional and international partners will help the country to consolidate its gains and move forward towards the key goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the African Union's Agenda 2063, as well as the AU's effort to silence the guns by 2020. We support the work of MINUSCA in resolving the multifaceted security issues in the Central African Republic using both military and non-military methods, including comprehensive measures to prevent young people from participating in armed violence.

Secondly, with regard to the security front, we stress the importance of ensuring that the Government continues to implement its national security strategy and joint concept for the deployment of the defence and internal security forces, as well as its management of weapons and ammunition, with the support of MINUSCA and other partners. We also commend the invaluable contribution that the European Union Training Mission has made to training Central African forces.

We also want to note the importance of the initiative that other States in the region have taken to intensify the bilateral commissions between the Central African Republic and Cameroon, Chad and Sudan. We hope they will enable effective cooperation not just in addressing transnational security threats but also in revitalizing economic ties. It is important that regional and international partners continue supporting the Government's efforts to address vital issues of security and justice, as well as such important aspects of development as providing basic services to the population and creating jobs.

Thirdly, on the humanitarian front, against a backdrop of underfunding and a reduced humanitarian presence, the increasing numbers of internally displaced people and refugees from the Central African Republic in neighbouring countries demand the international community's immediate attention.

Lastly, in expressing our full support to Mr. Onanga-Anyanga and his able team, we would like to emphasize that with the Government's clear vision of the way to tackle the challenges it is facing, we have an opportunity before us and we should continue to strive to give the people of the Central African Republic the support they deserve and expect.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I will now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of the Russian Federation.

We thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Parfait Onanga-Anyanga, Special Representative of the African Union Bédializoun Moussa Nébié and Brigadier General Herminio Teodoro Maio for their briefings.

We share the concern expressed by the Secretary-General in his report on the Central African Republic (S/2018/611) about the continuing unstable situation in the country, especially on the security front. A significant part of its territory is still controlled by armed groups. Despite some positive progress on the problem of expanding Government administrative control, the local authorities are still not fully functioning. The bloody inter-ethnic and interreligious encounters continue, and the confrontations between gangs are worsening. There are intense clashes between armed groups over territory, resources and key trade routes. The rhetoric of hate speech is a catalyst in this. We want to emphasize that such behaviour should have no place in a country whose citizens are striving for peaceful coexistence.

We would like to express our sincere condolences for the continuing losses among peacekeepers. The courage of the Blue Helmets in the Central African Republic cannot be overestimated. We fully support the efforts of the United Nations Multidimensional

Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic and of Mr. Onanga-Anyanga personally. We realize that the Mission has a difficult job, considering the size of the country and the presence of so many armed groups.

We are also concerned about the further deterioration of the socioeconomic and humanitarian situation. We urge all the parties to the conflict to ensure humanitarian access to the victims and the authorities to continue to work to create conditions conducive to the safe voluntary return of refugees and internally displaced persons to their homes.

There can be no question that one of the key conditions for the long-term stabilization of the situation in the Central African Republic is the implementation of the programme for the disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation of combatants. We hope that future progress with that initiative, and with involving the main armed groups in it, will help to normalize the situation. The road map for a settlement in the Central African Republic adopted through the mediation of the African Union in Libreville on 17 July 2017 constitutes a good foundation for launching an inclusive political dialogue. We share positive assessment in the Secretary-General's report of the progress made in implementing the African Initiative for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic, for which the panel of facilitators conducted two full-fledged rounds of meetings on the ground with all the leaders of the main armed groups with the aim of consolidating their demands for the holding of further negotiations with the Government. In our view, it will be crucial to ensure that all parties to the Libreville agreements make additional efforts to implement the relevant provisions as soon as possible.

We note the steps that Bangui is taking in the area of security-sector reform with a view to restoring its control throughout the country. That is needed to help normalize the situation in the Central African Republic, including with the support of the international community, and to fulfil the national defence plan approved by President Touadera in order to gradually transfer responsibility for running the country to its lawful authorities. For our part, we want to affirm that Russia will continue to support the authorities of the Central African Republic in reforming their national security sector. In 2017 our instructors trained 200 Central Africans, and we plan to hold similar training courses for 400 members of the Central African armed forces in 2018. We also intend to increase our humanitarian assistance, particularly where providing the population with medical services is concerned.

I now resume my functions as President of the Security Council.

I give the floor to the representative of the Central African Republic.

Ms. Kpongo (Central African Republic) (*spoke in French*): Mr. President, I would like to congratulate you on two fronts: first, on your country's presidency of the Security Council for the month of June and the skill with which you are carrying out your duties, and secondly, on your country's organization of the FIFA World Cup, which is creating such excitement. I also thank you for convening today's very important meeting.

I had not intended to the floor after the very relevant statements by all of the previous speakers, in particular the briefing on the report of the Secretary-General (S/2018/611) by Mr. Parfait Onanga-Anyanga, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Central African Republic and Head of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA). What can I add to the analysis we have heard of the security and humanitarian situation in the country, not to mention the area of human rights? I strongly support the Special Representative's anxious calls to the Council to supply MINUSCA with the capabilities it needs to respond to its intensely challenging area of operations and the increasing number of hotbeds of tension. The panel of facilitators of the African Initiative for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic is doing commendable work under the leadership of Mr. Nébié. We hope that the consultations will culminate in an understanding among all the parties to the crisis in the Central African Republic. The ultimate goal is to establish dialogue in a calm environment, which is a sine qua non for a genuine return to peace.

To respond to the remarks by the representative of France, on behalf of my Government, I would like to reiterate our sincere gratitude to the troop-contributing countries whose citizens have given their lives in the cause of peace. I thank all our bilateral and international partners for their ongoing efforts and unwavering support to the authorities of the Central African Republic.

The meeting rose at 12.10 p.m.